The MAN *of* NO SORROWS

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THE MAN OF NO SORROWS

THE MAN OF NO SORROWS

BY

COULSON KERNAHAN

Author of "God and the Ant," "The Child, The Wise Man and the Devil," etc.

With Illustrations by
JAMES CLARK, R.I.

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TO

LADY NICOLL

Dear Lady Nicoll,

When I was a young, inexperienced, and unknown writer, Sir William Robertson Nicoll showed me kindnesses which he may have forgotten, but I have not.

My first booklet, "God and the Ant," was dedicated to him. May I honour this, my latest booklet (a companion-work to "God and the Ant"), by inscribing it to you?

Yours very sincerely,

COULSON KERNAHAN

SAVAGE CLUB,
ADELPHI TERRACE,
LONDON.

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THE MAN OF NO SORROWS

I

In a dream I saw a strange sight in our England. From all parts of the country the people flocked to the capital, where long lines of Venetian masts, pennoned and—like children joining hands in a dance—linked each to each by festoons of flowers, made of every thoroughfare an avenue of joy. Triumphal arches, gay as Hope's rainbow, spanned the streets at intervals, as the rainbow spans the sky. Flags fluttered from every pole, housetop, or vantage ground; and windows and balconies were ablaze with bunting and colour, until London, that big brown moth which has settled upon

the map of England, and now stretches whirring and smoke-hued wings over what were once the green fields and valleys of the Thames, seemed suddenly transformed into a huge butterfly, poised upon the gayest flower in all the gay gardens of the land. In the great open space of Hyde Park, and apparently for some occasion of national or universal rejoicing of which I was unaware, had been temporarily erected a circular or monster marquee of such extent that the largest army in the world might easily have been encamped thereunder, and from the highest point of the marquee floated the Royal Standard of England.

Inside this monster marquee or palace-pavilion—packed to suffocation with what seemed to me millions of men and women—I seemed in my dream to be standing; and I saw that in the centre, on a crimson dais, was set a throne.

The dais and the throne were as yet unoccupied; but from the steps (richly carpeted, like those of an altar), which led down from the dais to the aisle of the pavilion, and thence, a third of a mile away, to the State entrance, a broad space, guarded on either side by double lines of troops, was kept clear, as if for an approaching procession. Over the great concourse of expectant, pulsing, palpitating humanity, waves of excitement swept and swayed, as wind-ripples sweep a field of standing corn or virgin grass. Ever and anon the tense and waiting worshippers would bend towards each other to whisper, "He will soon be here! He is on the way. The Man of No Sorrows, the New Nazarene, the Joy-Bringer, the Life-Giver, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world who was to come!"

Then, turning to one who stood next to me, I said, "Of whom speak they? And who is the Messiah and Saviour

they await?" And, looking at me strangely, the man made answer, "Whence come you that you are ignorant of such great happenings? Know, then, that there has arisen, in the East, one with power to heal the sick and to raise the dead, who—albeit declaring himself to be but man and mortal as we all are—claims to be the King-Messiah of the Jews and Saviour of the world. Already he has restored to Israel the Kingdom. Already the infidel has been driven out of Palestine, and the scattered tribes of the Jews returned from every corner of the earth to their own land."

"And are his claims to be King-Messiah of the Jews and Saviour of the world admitted by the rulers of the earth?" I asked. "And what does he here in Christian England?"

"England," was the reply, "has for long withstood his claims. England is, in fact, the last of the powers to

"The common people hear this new Messiah gladly"
(*see p.* 13)

acknowledge him, not because England was unwilling to see Israel re-established among the nations, but because England, as a Christian nation, would not recognise one who claims to overthrow, or rather to supersede, the Christ. But in England, as elsewhere, the common people hear this New Messiah gladly, inasmuch as not only has he worked miracles innumerable, giving sight to the blind, making whole the cripple and the maimed, healing the sick and raising the dead, but because he has also promised to the people of England and to the peoples of all the earth, to make for them a new world of happiness and joy, and for ever to make an end of sorrow. Had it lain with emperors, kings, rulers, peers, and the Churches, this Messiah's claim was not likely to be recognised; but witnessing the miracles he has worked, and listening to his promise, the peoples of all lands have cried out:

"Shall we, on hearsay, believe in One who, two thousand years ago, is said to have worked miracles of which we have no proof, and reject one who to-day performs these and greater miracles within sight of all? If we reject the testimony of this man, then did the Jews rightly in rejecting the testimony of the Christ." And because these are democratic days, and because it was the will of the people that he be recognised as King-Messiah of the Jews and the World's Saviour which was to come, first one and then another Governor of Christendom yielded to the wishes of the people; and now, last of all, they who govern England are in like manner compelled to comply with popular clamour and to the people's will. To-day and in this place our own Boy-King will, on the advice of his Ministers, publicly recognise the Man of No Sorrows as his spiritual Over-Lord, the World's Saviour, and the

rightful ruler of the newly-constituted Kingdom of Palestine."

"What manner of man then," I asked, "is this New Messiah?"

"In feature and in the greater swarthiness of skin," was the answer, "he more nearly resembles the Arab or the Egyptian than the Jew, which is perhaps the reason why those who reject his claims assert that he is no true Messiah of the Jews, but an adventurer, born not in Palestine but in Arabia, and of Egyptian parents. They call him a Mullah or a Mahdi, declaring that he claims to be the Messiah of the Jews only that he might gather to his support the wealth and the power of that wealthy and powerful people. 'Tis said that he has rediscovered the lost magic of his Egyptian ancestors, and that it is by virtue of this magic he performs miracles."

"And his appearance?" I asked.

"In appearance," came the answer, "he bears the most extraordinary likeness, save that he is darker of skin, to the pictures of Our Lord. This likeness is accentuated by the fact that he wears the dress of the Arab of to-day, which dress is not greatly different from the garment worn in ancient Palestine, and so by the Christ. This difference there is, however, that while the Man of Sorrows was poorly arrayed, the Man of No Sorrows wears robes of the finest linen, richly embroidered and sewn with precious stones and pearls. Soon you shall see and hear him for yourself. Him all the kings and rulers of the earth, save only our own and the Vicar of Rome, have acknowledged, and him to-day our own Boy-King, seated on yonder throne, will publicly, in the sight of his subjects, welcome to our England. Even now I hear the cannon which herald his approach."

As the man spoke the gaily striped

tenting, which was stretched over the vast framework of the pavilion, suddenly trembled, as quiver and tremble forest leaves before the first breath of an oncoming storm. For a moment the canvas sagged and hung loosely, as sags a ship's sails when the wind drops. The next instant it swelled and rose as rises a woman's bosom at the intaking of breath. There was the deep, low rumbling of distant guns, drowned almost instantly by a mighty roar of voices that was like the roar of many waters. A wind seemed suddenly to spring up from outside and the packed million inside the pavilion sprang to their feet, white and trembling in awe, or flushed with eager joy. Outside the multitudinous tumult increased. As each huge wave of an incoming tide booms and crashes and hurls a heavier volume of water, and with a mightier roar, upon the beach, so every moment there rolled in upon us, and

with ever-increasing violence, and in ever-increasing volume of sound, the million-throated cheers and prayers and cries of the multitudes. As the doors of the pavilion were suddenly flung open to the advancing procession, a great wind swept up the aisles, and the blare of many trumpets smote like a blow upon the ears. And again the cry went up, "He comes! He comes! The Bringer of Joy, the Slayer of Sorrow! 'Tis He! The Saviour comes!"

First in the procession, alone, unattended, and bare-headed, with sandals on his feet, and clad in a robe of royal purple, broidered with precious stones and pearls, walked he who claimed to be the Messiah of the Jews and Saviour of the world. Behind him, at a distance —dwarfed by comparison into beings of another race, pigmy and mean—followed many of the great of the earth and of the nation, our own Boy-King, white and trembling, in the forefront.

I saw but the side face of the Messiah as he passed; but suddenly some strange and mesmeric spell came over me. From the world's history two scores of centuries rolled away. I was an Englishman no longer, but a Jew at the Gate of Jerusalem, and one of many who spread their garments in the way or cut down branches from the trees to strew before Him unto whom all bowed down, crying out, "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest."

Save for his great height, the likeness to the Man of Sorrows was so extraordinary, and so extraordinary the spell he cast over all, that had he but claimed to be Jesus of Nazareth, instead of one who came to supersede the Saviour, the spell had been complete, and I, too, had fallen before him in worship and love, to cry out "My Lord and my God!"

The effort to resist that impulse turned me faint; a mist swam before my eyes, and for a space I saw and heard no more of what was happening. How long I remained thus I do not know; but, when my faint had passed, the Man of No Sorrows was standing upon the dais, with his back to the people and facing the seated King. What the Boy-Ruler had said to him or to the multitude, what ceremonial of welcome and acknowledgment had been enacted, I did not know, but bowing low to the Monarch, who motioned him to be seated at his side, the Messiah obeyed. For a space the two talked together. Then I gathered that the Man of No Sorrows was craving permission to speak to the people, for, rising, he again made obeisance to the young ruler of England, and standing at the right hand of the throne, turned to face the multitude. Save, as has been said, for the greater swarthiness

of skin and the towering height, it was the Saviour of the World come again into the world who stood before us; and instinctively, as it were, and against my will, I fell upon my knees, as had fallen that immense multitude. I strove to rise, but some power outside myself held me down. With hair parted between wide white brows and falling upon his shoulders, eyes that seemed to me the home of the stored lightnings, drawn thither from stormy skies—here was one who was not merely a monarch among men, but one surely who was more than man.

In a voice low and musical as the soft falling of summer rain, yet heard of all, even as the rain-cloud in falling distributes itself to the heart of every grass-blade and flower in field or garden over which it passes, the Man of No Sorrows spoke.

II

He told of his earlier years—of the boyhood days when his heart had yearned towards his people and their fallen fortunes, even as one who came before him had yearned over Jerusalem. He told how, dreaming himself out into the sunset, he had stood even as Moses stood upon Pisgah, and had seen afar the Promised Land of his fathers, the Palestine that was to be—her palaces and her temples rebuilt, her scattered tribes regathered, her prosperity restored, the invader and the infidel driven out, and Israel, under her own King of the tribe of David and Judah—proud in her place as one of the great powers of the East. He told how as a young man, in seasons of midnight waking and twilight watching, he had seen the vision widen, until nothing could

content him but that he might be not only the deliverer of his own people, but the Saviour of all people in the world; how he had wrestled with God in prayer, until, in response to his prayer, strange powers of healing had come. How, not content with this, he had continued in vigil and fast, until at last, even as the walls of Jericho fell before the trumpet blast of God's prophet, so the walls of that strange, impregnable citadel wherein man's ancient, unseen, and mysterious enemy Death has in security so long entrenched himself, weakened and fell away under the assault; and that to him, the Messiah, was entrusted the power not only to heal the sick, but to raise the dead.

Ceasing to speak of himself, he now made direct appeal to the people.

"Beloved," he said. "For two thousand years you have grievously erred in your thought of God. You

have spoken of Him as suffering; you have pictured Him as sorrowing over humanity, forgetting that for God to sorrow would be for Him to renounce His own omnipotence.

"Sorrow and regret are the outcome of erring and finite nature. In the heart of Infinite and Omnipotent God, sorrow and regret are not and can never be. God is Love, God is Light, God is Gladness, God is Glory, God is Joy, and because God is all this, and more, He would have all men to be glad and joyful even as He. To sorrow is to sin against our fellow men, and to be guilty of black ingratitude to the Giver of All.

"Yet has man so sinned from the first, and it is that man shall so sin no more, and to make an end of woe, that I am come."

The Man of No Sorrows paused and swept that great assembly with burning eyes. His voice, which had been

low and pleading, suddenly deepened. Into his face came something of the splendour of stormy skies. He flung forth his next words challengewise and like an unexpected bugle call to battle heard at midnight by an army encamped under the stars.

"Beloved," he said. "At the turning-point of the world's history, when Israel was looking for its Messiah and mankind for their Saviour, came One to Whom was entrusted power like unto mine. Against that One, who in the awful and transparent purity of His spirit, the passionate love of humanity that consumed Him, the supreme self-sacrifice and surrender of self, and the spotless sinlessness and beauty of His life and death, stands aloof and alone in the history of the world, and has set an ideal and an example that are scarcely attainable by one who is not more than man—against Him God forbid that I should

entertain or breathe an unloving thought. His is to me a name so linked with all that is sacred, that I must needs pause before and after I speak it, that no less hallowed a name be neighbour to that name on my lips —the holy and adored name of . . .

"JESUS

. . . who was called the Christ."

As with intensest and passionate reverence the Man of No Sorrows spoke that sacred name, the great marquee with its garish colouring, its gaping crowds, became suddenly transformed as it were into the Temple of the Most High; and in the awful silence which followed, one seemed to feel the pent-up breath of worshippers holding back their sobs. Struggling with some strange emotion, the Man of No Sorrows spoke again, and upon his face was a light like that of one who has looked upon the face of God.

"Beloved," he said brokenly. "If I bid you to turn aside from the path those bleeding feet have trod, if I bid you to forget one lesson at least of that unparalleled and beautiful life, it is in poignant anguish of soul that I do so, and only because I believe that I am so charged of God. For Him of whom I speak . . . Jesus . . . who was called the Christ—was indeed God's messenger, God's Visible Presence here on earth; yet none the less, by misreading that message, and misrepresenting the Will of God, He has misled and wronged humanity to its undoing. Lonely even as a boy, He withdrew Himself from His fellows and sought only the company of His elders and the wise. Even to the mother who, though haply she feared Him and failed Him in understanding, yet never failed Him in love—even to her He denied Himself, saying: 'Woman, what have I to

do with thee? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' Lonelier still as a man, friendless—or so far removed in spirit from His friends that He and they were creatures from different worlds—wifeless, childless, misunderstood, and wedded to sorrow as to a bride, He brooded so long over the sin and sadness of the world, over His own tragic destiny, His coming betrayal and death, and man's doom, that Sorrow seemed to Him the Truth of Truths, the Alpha and the Omega of human life, the beginning, the outcome, and the end of all. Wherefore, to a world that was already wounded and bleeding to death by reason of sorrow, He proclaimed that only by sorrow can perfection come. Wherefore, He who was sent to make known to all God's glad gospel of Love and Joy, set up instead the worship of Sorrow, and so bequeathed

to the men and women He came to save a heritage of Eternal Woe. That woe, that sorrow, I come for ever to take away. The burden of the Cross I lift for ever from your shoulders; the shadow of the Cross I banish for ever from your sight. Here and to-day we take an eternal farewell of the Religion of Sorrows. Beloved, a God is dying in this hour. Let us for the last time reverently kneel to do homage to One who, if He sought to be humanity's Saviour—and failed, yet failed not greatly, and even in failing, has for two thousand years won and held humanity's worship and love.

" . . . Jesus . . . to Thee in this the hour which proclaims Thy failure, and Thy dethronement, and when Thou dost pass out, defeated and deposed, from the place Thou hast held in our hearts—to Thee for the last time we kneel in lowly reverence. If from

this hour, Thee we cease to worship, Thee at least, we can never cease to love."

As he so spoke the Man of No Sorrows knelt in prayer, and from the worshippers rose a woman's anguished cry—"By thine Agony and bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost . . ." She paused, and from the lips of the kneeling worshippers was compelled the pleading cry—

"Good Lord, deliver us!"

For the moment the vast assembly was as one creature in the death-throes. A million bosoms heaved in one sob as heaves the huge bulk of Leviathan with the last passing of breath. For a space, silence, awful and vibrating, settled over all. Then, as a tear-drop falls from the eyes of a mourner

bending for the last time over the face of her loved dead, so, from an unseen belfry, there fell the sudden and reverberant note of the passing bell, followed by the far-off booming of a gun. Again for a space there was silence, tense and terrible.

Then, suddenly—as if a huge hand had swept at one stroke the whole gamut of all glad sound—unseen bells overhead broke out in a rippling pæan of joy. It was as if there had been swinging, 'twixt earth and sky, a thousand chains of silver bells, down which all the little child-angels of heaven—homesick for a sight of the green fields of earth, and for the prattle of baby-playmates—had craved permission to clamber; and as if, down the merry chain-ladders of music, and tumbling the one over the other, the little revellers were sliding and scrambling in haste to reach Old Earth. And out in the park, like

the first lark-song heralding the morn, a thousand bugles carolled the réveillé, the dull thud of a hundred guns booming a deep and harmonious bass to the dancing tenor of bugles and bells. And over that multitudinous assembly, strained almost beyond endurance by the intensity of the final and passionate farewell, a great reaction of feeling swept like an engulfing wave.

Sorrow and regret had passed away. The Reign of Joy had begun.

III

THAT day, and for many a day and night thereafter, the people made holiday and continued in revel.

"For two thousand years," they cried; "humanity has sorrowed, and sorrowed vainly, seeing that out of sorrow comes only sickness, and out of sickness comes death. But now has the night of terror passed, now is come the morning of our joy."

And so for a season men and women were happy and contented, turning life into a feast at which all were greedy to eat their fill.

Yet soon from the faces of the people something of inner grace and beauty had gone, for though, out of the clay of happiness, God, the great sculptor, has fashioned many a beautiful face and form, yet is it with the sharp chisel of sorrow that the loveliest lines

are graven. And so it was that as the months wore on, it seemed to me as if, comely as were the countenances of the people—into that comeliness something of coarseness had already crept. Mere idlers, pleasure-lovers, and pleasure-seekers as they now were, their feet were set on the road that leads to self-indulgence. Many there be who walk that road and walk it warily, meaning to turn back or to turn aside when they come to the spot where the sign-post is set to point the downward way to Sensuality. And many there be who foot confidently on, believing the sign-post still to be in front of them—only to find that the sign-post is set, not at any parting of the ways but at the journey's end. For the people whom I saw in my dream, simple pleasures at first sufficed, but these they followed to excess, whereat the Man of No Sorrows, grieving that those for whom he had thought to make a heaven of earth

whom he had hoped to lift upward and Godward in gladness and well-doing, should stoop downward toward the beast, rebuked the people for forgetting God and following after the lusts of the flesh. But save only in so far as he could minister to their needs by restoring the sick to health, the dead to life, they heeded him not.

From the lives of the people sorrow had gone, and with sorrow were fast going pity and love. A sorrow shared draws men and women together in companionship and in consolation, but in the new world which I saw in my dream the pleasure seekers had ceased to be pleasure sharers, for each was greedy of new pleasure and grudged to the other his or her share of joy.

Nor did the ending of Sorrow make as he had promised, an end of sickness, for some there were by nature weak and sickly of body, and these, when they fell ill, from rioting and feast-

ing, were brought to the Man of No Sorrows to heal. These he healed, albeit admonishing them sternly to live cleanly and moderately, but when in giving themselves over again to new debauchery, they were again brought to him, he bade them begone, refusing, to such as they, the ministry of healing. And when there died certain of those whom he had so sent away, the people murmured, saying, "Hast thou already forgotten thy promise to replace sorrow by joy? Raise, then, these our brethren, even as Jesus of Nazareth raised Lazarus of old."

But sternly the Man of No Sorrows made answer, ". . . Jesus . . . whom men call the Christ, did indeed heal many who were sick, and did indeed raise certain of the dead; but this He did as a sign to the people that His power was of God—not to make an end of sickness and of death. Nor dare I so sin against the living God as to call

back from the dead those who have brought disease and death upon themselves by an evil life. Wherefore be ye warned, for the power by which miraculously, I heal the sick and raise the dead, is of God, and if ye thus abuse His gifts, that power shall as miraculously be withdrawn. Already I am as one out of whom virtue has departed. Already I feel my power fail. Haply by my fasting and prayer, and by your repentance, it may be continued and restored, but that power shall never be wielded by me to set at naught the judgment of Heaven."

And, hearing these words, the people, who hitherto had murmured only privily against him and among themselves, now openly upbraided and reviled him. Him now they ceased entirely to obey, returning as a dog to his vomit, to feasting, lusting, and debauch.

Now, too, a pleasure enjoyed must

mean to them yet another and immediate pleasure promised, else were they restless, morose, and disturbed. And when innocent pleasures palled from very satiety, they hesitated not to indulge in grosser joys which left the stain and blotch of grossness on body and face and spirit; and when even these grosser joys failed to satisfy their jaded appetite, they sought after that which was bestial and unclean. Now, too, against the sickly, they that were strong and lusty of body cried out, saying, "Why burden we ourselves with those that mope and ail? In a world given over to gladness there is no place for such as they. We would forget misery, not be reminded of it. When we come from the feasting and the dancing, when we remember the ruby light—like the stored splendour of red sunsets—that glowed in the wine, when our lips

are yet faint from warm kisses — when we come from all this, and are reminded by the sight of the sick and the dying that for us, too, disease and death and dissolution of the body may be near at hand, then are our pleasures turned to dust and ashes, then have we neither heart nor desire for further joy. Away with them! Cast them out! Slay them, if need be, lest we, too, become sickly of soul and body as they."

And so it came to pass that those who fell ill, or who were already diseased, were driven forth into waste and desolate places to die in despair and alone, or else in greater despair, and in colonies of loathsome sickness, sores, and shame, to drag out what yet remained to them of life. And seeing all this, it seemed to me as if the world, in which the Man of No Sorrows had promised that Sorrow there should be none, had become

like a paradise in Pacific Seas where all is a sunny and smiling garden of flowers, save for some lone lepers' isle, where the world's outcasts, whose bodies in death the worm shall devour, must, in life, impotently watch the foul worm of disease devouring and consuming their corrupting flesh. And looking upon the fair women and stalwart men who, in health and strength, made merry in that world in which it had been promised that there should be no Sorrow, I saw that a soul-leprosy more horrible than the leprosy of the body was already doing its obscene and deadly work.

IV

THEN the scene of my dream shifted to Jerusalem. For all its hotels and bazaars, buyers, beggars, and baksheesh importunators, its motley crowd of tourists, wandering hither and thither aimlessly, guide-book in hand, or else trailing languidly in droves like tired sheep before the shepherd, Jerusalem — perhaps because of the dreadful business of traffic and barter in holy memories, by which it throve —had long seemed to me the most melancholy capital in the world, a dead city, a tenantless house, among the refuse at whose doors hungry dogs and jackals scraped and howled at night, even as, by day, human jackals prowled its streets. But in my dream I saw such a New Jerusalem as that of which God spoke to Isaiah the Prophet, saying: "For, be-

hold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."

When, in my dream, I looked upon this New Jerusalem, Night, like a great black spider, was slowly withdrawing across the fleecy cloud-rack and network that he had woven over the face of the sky; but, spider-wise, he still lurked watchfully and wickedly in his hiding place in the west. In the eastern corner of the world, rumours of the coming dawn were stirring; and here, like a glow-worm, caught and meshed in gossamer, a single star throbbed in a film of cloud, as if striving to break free. On the eastern hills, vague shadows, menacing as a concealed and crouching foe, dimly silhouetted themselves into the

friendly form of trees, and, as they did so, a faint wind stirred like the long-drawn sigh of sentinels on guard over a besieged and sleeping city, when they see the first streak of grey in the dark tresses of ageing and waning night. Then, like a rocket which signals the oncoming of a relieving army, a slender shaft of light spired up from over the world's edge. The star trembled to a point, and ceased to throb, and across the western valley I saw emerge — faint at first as a spectral moon when the sun is high —a ghost city, exquisitely beautiful and perfect in construction and in harmony of curve, contour and line. It stood upon the edge of a declivity that flanked a wide plateau; and in the wan and watery light of early dawn it seemed at first to be builded entirely of purest pearl. As the skies lightened, the great temple in the city's midst, and the towers,

turrets and outer walls, whitened to translucent alabaster, and after that to silver.

Then as the glory of the coming dawn tipped the spires and minarets of the city, they pierced the blue with burning tongues of saffron, as crocus buds pierce the snow. Seen thus, its topmost points touched with golden fire, like mountain peaks when the sun is sinking, its alabaster aglow like topaz, its marble flushed to amber, Jerusalem was of such unearthly loveliness that I could have imagined it some celestial city miraged in the desert—I could have believed that for me the clouds had parted, that I might have sight of the heavenly place, the Mansion of the Blest, promised of old by Christ to His disciples, or that I saw some such vision of Jerusalem the Golden, whose Builder and Maker is God, as was vouchsafed to the dying eyes of John the Divine. Then the

sleeping city faded away before my eyes, and when in my dream I again looked upon it, night had come. In Jerusalem, more even than in the capital of any other country which had disowned or rejected the Christ and welcomed the Religion of Joy, the people had abandoned themselves to the ceaseless pursuit of pleasure. Day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, the revelry had become faster, more furious, and more frequent. Now at last the restraints of decency had gone. Infamy stalked the streets so that the dwellers in Jerusalem had sunk to the level of those who of old had peopled Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain.

In the evening of the day on which I had looked on the sleeping city, in all its beauty, the climax had come. From early morning the populace had given itself up to orgies and debauch; and now, at night, those wild beasts of the

slums, which have taken the place of the infinitely less wild and less dangerous beasts of the jungle and the desert, which civilisation has driven out, stole forth from their lairs, and herding together like ravenous wolves, rushed hither and thither to loot, to rape, and to destroy. Temples, palaces, dwelling-places, shops, and drink stores, were broken into and pillaged. Those who offered resistance were ruthlessly butchered, and ill were it for any young girl or unhappy woman who fell into the hands of that drink-maddened, lust-inflamed, and bestial crew. At one house, the inmates of which, behind bolted doors and barricaded windows, had opened fire upon the besiegers, the cry of "Burn them out!" was raised, and soon a thousand hands were busy bringing together woodwork of all sorts, chairs, tables, and boxes, to pile together against the walls as fuel. Once the flames were a-roar, and men

and woman and children were perishing; once the fire-lust had been added to the other lusts which possessed the populace; and red desire to witness the satyr-flames embrace and crush and lick with scarlet lips at the warm flesh of the victims, was awake and demanded to be gratified, there was no satiety. Ere long half Jerusalem was in ashes, and the blackened corpses of men, women, and little children lay roasting and smoking among the embers; but still the wild beasts of the slums, drunk with the stench of burning flesh and maddened by the thirst for blood, licked at dry lips and lashed itself into still hungrier fury of appetite for new prey.

V

ALL this the Man of No Sorrows had witnessed with horror, anguish, and shame. The day he had returned to the fair and New Jerusalem which he had rebuilded, he had been as one distraught at discovering the wickedness which had come over the people whom he loved even as his own children, and to whom it was his glory to have restored the Kingdom. In public and in private he had not ceased to entreat them, to exhort them, to command them to repentance, ere they brought upon themselves the vengeance of God; but his power to work miracles was now withdrawn and they no longer gave heed to his words, but bade him to be gone and leave them to their pleasures lest a worse thing happened to him.

Seeing now in this last day that the ruin of the city was imminent, he had sought by force to stay certain of the rioters from their deeds of violence, whereat they had mocked and mistreated him, casting great stones and calling out: "Come, let us crucify him, even as our forefathers crucified the false Messiah and malefactor, Jesus." Hearing this, his heart had failed him, and, fearing for his life, he had stolen away to hide himself till the tumult was passed. At nightfall, when they were firing the city, he had come forth secretly, and — staggering like a drunken man from his wounds, from weakness and pain—he had wandered, he knew not whither, passing through the city gates and thence out into a walled enclosure, where was a garden. There—his heart lonelier and sadder than moonless and starless skies that brood over a battlefield thick strewn with corpses of the slain—he had paced

backward and forward in the very ecstasy of despair.

"Me, the world knows as the Man of No Sorrows," he said; "yet in all the world there is no Sorrow like to mine; for I who promised to bring life and love and happiness to my fellows have brought upon them only death and hate and doom." And recalling his promises to the people on the day of his supreme triumph, when, throned on a crimson dais, in the capital of the greatest Empire in the world, the rulers of the earth had knelt to do homage to him as their Spiritual Overlord and the Messiah that was to come, he remembered the heart-cry that had been wrung from a woman among the multitude:

"By thine Agony and bloody Sweat; by thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death and Burial; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension;

and by the coming of the Holy Ghost," . . . and the throng's response . . "Good Lord, deliver us."

Falling on his knees, with his face bowed to the ground, the Man of No Sorrows cried aloud in agony, repeating the awful words of that ancient heart-cry and prayer; and though to these eyes of mine there was no sudden opening of the heavens, from which descended that Spirit of Consolation, whose gentle coming men liken unto that of a dove, yet was I none the less aware that the man was in some strange way sustained and comforted by the Holy Spirit of God. Then, even as I looked, I saw, standing beside him, One in whose eyes was *the* Sorrow—I mean not such sorrow as comes to a mortal from anguish of his own, but the Sorrow which in all the world's history has come only to the One whose eyes behold all the sorrow of all the world.

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And laying a hand upon the bowed head, the Man of Sorrows spoke to him of whom it was said that, in his heart, sorrow there was none, saying:

"Brother and beloved, be comforted! It is I."

And at sound of that voice, and at sight of those eyes, the Man of No Sorrows reeled back as if suddenly blinded and in great fear; blinded, because so it must ever be when the sinful first look upon the dazzling and accusing Purity of the sinless One; in fear, not as of one who fears aught for himself, but because of that great and trembling fear with which a mortal first finds himself in the Holy and Awful Presence of God.

And falling prostrate at the feet of Christ, the Man of No Sorrows cried out: "What have I to do with thee . . . Jesus . . . the Christ. For Thou

art God, and I am man, and of all men the most sinful and vile."

And tenderly the Christ made answer, "Yea, but am I not also Man? Wherefore there is no sorrow of thine, brother and beloved, which I may not and do not share."

And with a cry of exceeding bitterness the Man of No Sorrows spoke again, saying: "Yea, Lord, but Thou art the world's Saviour, and now by my sin are the people whom Thou so lovest for ever lost. For myself I ask no mercy. My punishment I would have Thee to increase tenfold rather than, by one jot or tittle, to remit. But these my brothers and sisters whom I love, yet have led away and caused to turn from Thee—must they suffer eternally because of my sin?"

And as he so spoke the Man of No Sorrows fell with bowed head to sob out the anguish of his repentance at

the feet of Christ. And I saw that the Crucified One threw out and opened His pierced hands and bent towards the kneeling man in such yearning of infinite love that it seemed to me there was upgathered at that moment, in His heart, all the love and sorrow with which women have yearned over a little child since first the world began. And seeing that the Man of No Sorrows had become, as it were, as a child, and was sobbing, even as a child sobs, in the anguish of his remorse, the Christ who had bidden the little children to come unto him, knelt beside the other, casting one arm around him, hushing and caressing him, even as a mother hushes and caresses her frightened child. And, as a child, thus comforted, continues at first convulsively to sob, with catching of breath and choking cries, until his terror be passed, and the

sobbing becomes less passionate and less frequent, and the cries and the catching of the breath cease, so, little by little, the Man of No Sorrows was quieted, and ceased entirely to sob, healed as it were by the Saviour's very touch.

And seeing that he was thus quieted, again the Saviour spoke:

"Brother and beloved, be comforted. Thou art not all answerable for that which has come to pass. Save only for a few, Christians, while continuing to bear my name, had long ceased to bear my Cross. And seeing that Sorrow had ceased for them to have aught of divine mystery, divine message, or divine meaning, God who bringeth good out of evil, permitted thee to come promising happiness to the people, knowing that in due time He should make all things plain. Wherefore to the people thou didst promise an end of Sorrow, forgetting

that, in sorrow, even the wild flower on the hill-side must droop her head and consent to see her beauty and her bravery pass, that, by the breaking of her sad and shrivelled heart, she may sow the world anew with beauty, and scatter far and wide a hundred seeds of loveliness like unto her own. To the people thou didst preach the religion of pleasure, forgetting that though Pleasure may point to a lighted room, Sorrow to a darkened cell, yet may that lighted room become a soul's death chamber, and that darkened cell the place of a soul's birth. Thou hast told the people that out of sorrow comes sickness, and out of sickness death, but I say unto thee that in sorrow of man's own making there may indeed be bitterness, sickness, and death. But sorrow of God's sending, is the loving hand-touch of the Great Physician upon a wound that He must probe to

heal, or upon some spiritual sickness, ailment, or soul-fester, of which, haply, even the sufferer is unaware.

"Brother and beloved, be comforted. Because of this thy sorrow there shall come to the people of all the earth a new and greater awakening of Righteousness and Holiness, a new and greater revelation of the mystery and the meaning of the Birth and Death and Passion of God's Incarnate Son. To the people upon whom thou hast brought a great darkness, God shall presently bring a yet greater light. My Cross thou hast temporarily been permitted to cast down that my Cross should newly be lifted up, and should eternally triumph over all, for now not only the Religion of Sorrow but the Religion of Love, which cometh out of that Sorrow, shall rule men's hearts and conquer the world.

"Arise now, beloved, my brother. The morn is not yet, and in blood

and in fire this night must end. But be of good heart and play the man, for the Day of God is at hand wherein there shall come an end of striving between men and between the nations, when war shall cease from off the face of the earth, and when God's children, yea, all created things, shall dwell together, bound each to each in Christ's holy bond of Love."

Again the Saviour stooped to touch with pierced hands the bowed head of the Man of No Sorrows. Then slowly the Supreme and Sacred Figure of the Crucified One faded from my sight.

And then, like that purple passion flower of the skies which is of a moment's blossoming — the summer lightning, whose shining petals fade and fall to earth even as they unfold against the dark foliage of the clouds—the sky seemed suddenly to flower into flame, and then as sud-

denly to darken. The great dome of the Temple, undermined by fire, had fallen in, as falls the forest oak before the axe. For a space, dense volumes of smoke, rolling up from the debris of timber and masonry inside the ruin, hid everything from view. Then the furnace within the Temple flared forth again, a holocaust of flame, and casting from a huge beam, on which another beam was set transversely, and that still towered high above the Temple's nearer wall, *the vast and colossal Shadow of a Cross, seen against the red panel of smoke and sky.*

Beholding it, the Man of No Sorrows, his arms outstretched and with eyes turned radiantly upward upon the Shadowed Cross, fell again upon his knees. Then, even as there shone upon his upturned face a light so wonderful that, in all this wonderful world of earth and sea and sky, I

know nothing to which to liken it, he arose, and with firm step and fearless eyes walked back to confront the blood-drunken and murderous mob within the burning city — and the vision passed.

THE END

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